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Our Friend Iran?

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As the Reagan administration continues its secret, conciliatory tilt toward Iran, the president's advisers should not lose sight of the dubious background of the people they're cozying up to.

There are solid pragmatic grounds for seeking to paper over U.S.-Iranian differences. One of these, as we've reported, is the administration's hope that the United States will have at least some influential friends in Tehran when the Ayatollah Khomeini inevitably passes from the scene.

But lest the administration get carried away, we'd like to remind it of an inescapable fact: Khomeini and his top henchmen are bloodthirsty, unrepentant terrorists who have been rabidly anti-American.

Consider a likely successor to Khomeini, Hashemi Rafsanjani, speaker of the Iranian parliament. U.S. officials have pinned a substantial part of their hopes on Rafsanjani, and have presumably inspired sympathetic stories in the press, which referred to him as a "moderate" and credited him with helping to free the American hostages five years ago.

Well, our sources inside Iran point out that before he rose to his present eminence, Rafsanjani was co-owner of a battery service shop in the Street of Cheragh Bargh in Tehran. That was in the late 1970s under the shah's regime. It was in Rafsanjani's shop in 1977 that the bodies of two U.S. servicemen were found hidden beneath two cars. They had been killed in the anti-shah, anti-American terrorism that eventually brought Khomeini and Rafsanjani to power.

One of the future parliament leader's employees was arrested and imprisoned for the murder of the two Americans. But he was quickly released when Khomeini seized power in 1979, and has since gone to work for the Mussavi terrorist family, which has done more to kill and terrorize Americans than any group in the Middle East.

There are other high Iranian officials on the dishonor list:

■ Sadeq Khalkali, who was Rafsanjani's partner in the battery service center. Khalkali is now a jurist on Khomeini's Islamic revolutionary tribunal. Khalkali has sent thousands to die before the firing squads of the notorious Evin prison outside Tehran. By one responsible estimate, 4,000 Iranians have perished in Evin by gunfire and torture.

Khalkali is the man who described the charred remains of the U.S. servicemen who died in the aborted hostage rescue mission in 1980.

■ Oil Minister Mohammed Gharazi. Trained in Libyan and Palestinian terrorist schools during the mid-1970s, Gharazi showed his ruthlessness when he was made commander of the Revolutionary Guards operating against the Kurd rebels in northwestern Iran.

In 1980, Gharazi ordered his troops to massacre the entire population of a Kurdish village named Garena. More than 150 men, women and children were literally put to the sword. Gharazi boasted that he personally had beheaded at least a dozen of the victims.

■ Chief prosecutor Musavi Khoiniha. Khomeini's favorite pupil at the theological seminary in the holy city of Qom years ago, Khoiniha has been called "the ayatollah in the embassy" for his role in planning and leading the takeover of the American Embassy in November 1979. For more than a decade, Khoiniha was an "agent of influence" employed by the KGB.

■ Iran's ambassador to the Vatican, the Ayatollah Khosrow-Shahi. Khomeini's former chauffeur, he was believed to be second-in-command of the students who seized the American Embassy. He is reliably reported to be running an international network of terrorist operations out of his headquarters on the Via Nomentana, Rome, next-door to the Libyan Embassy. Khosrow-Shahi directs terrorists in Italy, Spain, France, West Germany and Britain.

■ Ali Nawai who, while an attache in the Iranian consulate in Bern, Switzerland, bought 300 tons of explosives on the black market in June 1982. Some of it is believed to have been used to blow up the U.S. Embassy and the Marine barracks in Beirut the following year, killing 258 Americans.

■ Mahmoud Nourani, Iranian charge d'affaires in Beirut. He was involved in the hijacking of TWA Flight 847 last June, in which an American Navy man was beaten and murdered.

There are other high Iranian officials, including Cabinet ministers and top diplomats, who were intimately involved in the planning, preparation and execution of terrorist acts against Americans. The administration would do well to remember whom they're dealing with as they pursue friendly relations with the Khomeini regime.

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